

PLAN FOR INCREASED OVERSIGHT

The purpose of this plan is to provide the NRC staff a means of evaluating the Department of Veterans Affairs' (DVA's) initial implementation of its Master Material License (MML) program. Since the DVA does not meet the recommended criterion of having a centrally controlled program (CCP) for five years, a plan for increased NRC oversight is appropriate in order to assure effective implementation of their program. This plan provides for a two-year increased oversight of the DVA's MML activities and is based on the integrated materials performance evaluation program (IMPEP)-type criteria developed for the DVA Readiness Review.

This approach for increased oversight differs from oversight provisions contained in NRC Inspection Manual Chapter (MC) 2810, "Master Material License Inspection Program." MC 2810 describes an annual review that includes conducting one or more independent inspections of MML permit holders per Region per year, accompanying MML inspectors at least once annually, and inspecting DVA management oversight at the MML's primary facility on an annual basis. In addition to performing the required MC 2810 reviews and inspections, a semi-annual review, including team inspections, of the DVA MML activities will be performed using the elements listed below.

The staff proposal for increased oversight differs from the current MC 2810 by adding several specific areas of review and conducting the review on a semi-annual basis for the two-year increased oversight.

- I. Status of the Materials Permitting Program (tracking systems, timeliness of permitting and inspections, etc.)
 - A. MC 2810 does not directly address this, but the inspection process reviews this item.
 - B. Increased DVA oversight will include a review of their timeliness in issuing permitting actions and conducting inspections.
- II. Technical Quality of Permitting Program
 - A. MC 2810 does not directly address this, but the inspection process reviews this item.
 - B. Increased DVA oversight will include independent NRC review of permit amendments and renewal applications, associated deficiency letters, and completed permits to verify consistency with NRC policies and procedures.
- III. Technical Quality of Inspections
 - A. MC 2810 addresses this element by requiring one or more assist (independent) inspections per year in each Region and NRC accompaniments of each MML inspector once per year.

- B. Increased oversight will involve independent NRC inspections of 30 percent of the higher risk DVA permittees, i.e., priority 1 and 2 programs, and accompaniments of each National Health Physics Program (NHPP) inspector semi-annually. The project manager will also receive and review all NHPP inspection reports and enforcement actions.

NOTE: Current MML project managers for the Air Force and Navy coordinate independent inspections totaling about 10 percent of the higher risk programs over the course of 1 year and accompany each MML inspector at least one time per year.

IV. Status of Training of Technical Staff

- A. MC 2810 does not directly address this, but the technical competency of the staff is evaluated.
- B. Increased oversight will involve NRC review of the status of DVA's progress in the training of their technical staff.

V. Implementation of DVA's Allegation and Incident Handling Programs

- A. MC 2810 does not address allegations, but incident response is evaluated during the inspection process.
- B. Increased oversight will involve NRC review of DVA's handling and processing of allegations.

VI. Management Oversight

- A. MC 2810 addresses this element by requiring an annual inspection of the MML's primary facility to include inspection of management oversight.
- B. In addition to the standard practice of performing a full review of the DVA National Radiation Safety Committee (NRSC) meeting minutes, activities, and staff attendance at quarterly NRSC meetings, increased oversight will include a visit to the NHPP office in Little Rock, Arkansas at the time of the IMPEP, and other semi-annual visits.

In addition to the above semi-annual program, and in accordance with the Letter of Understanding, it is important to note that the DVA will be required to submit all of their completed permitting actions to the Region III project manager for review.

After the first year of increased oversight, the NRC will conduct an assessment to decide what level of augmented oversight should be completed in the second year. If the DVA's performance begins to show decline, the initial level of augmented oversight or even an increased level of oversight will be performed for the second year. If the DVA shows acceptable performance, the augmented oversight will be lessened accordingly for the second year. Once the two year period of augmented oversight is over, regulation of the DVA should follow that of an established MML. However, if deficiencies are noted during the oversight period, the NRC should decide what course of action is appropriate at that time. In addition, the staff will send a

letter to the DVA to remind them of the importance of management attendance at the NRSC meetings and active management participation in the MML program. The letter will also emphasize that a lack of management participation and involvement could lead to escalated enforcement with possible civil penalty and loss of the MML.